



Social Care Services Board
12 May 2016

Internal Audit Report: Review of Foster Care Service Arrangements

Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Services

To review the summary of audit findings and Management Action Plan produced as a result of an internal audit review of Foster Care Service Arrangements

Introduction:

1. A review of Foster Care service arrangements was included within the 2015 /16 Internal Audit Plan and was prioritised by the Audit and Governance Committee. As the audit report held an overall audit opinion of Unsatisfactory it is to be considered at the Social Care Services Board.

Context:

2. The Fostering Service is responsible for recruiting, assessing, training and supporting a range of foster carers to meet the needs of our children who are looked after.
3. This audit of Foster Care arrangements focussed on the administrative and financial elements of the foster care service. The auditor did not evaluate the standard of care provided by the Fostering Service nor review the individual files of Children in Care.
4. The standards of care and the work of the Fostering Service in relation to meeting the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 and the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 are all subject to inspection by Ofsted. The most recent inspection by Ofsted in October / November 2014 was positive about the Fostering service and did not contain any recommended actions for the service.

5. The internal audit report sets out the findings and recommendations of the review, which was conducted in line with the agreed Terms of Reference contained within the report at Annex A.
6. An agreed Management Action Plan was prepared and is contained within the report. The recommendations of the review contained 27 recommendations of which 12 were rated high, 14 were medium and 1 low rating.

Work programme

7. Following the completion of the audit, officers within the service have progressed work to address the recommendations.
8. Many of the recommendations are linked to the need to improve electronic recording systems, with particular reference to the implementation of LCS, the electronic case record system used within Children's Services.
9. Implementation of the Fostering Service component of this system was always planned to start in 2015 and will be completed in January 2017. There is an existing work programme board that oversees this.
10. In the interim, officers within the service are ensuring that all spreadsheets maintained within the service are up to date and have a robust process in place that will ensure they are maintained pending the move to LCS.
11. The audit considered the keeping of records through electronic records (I-Drive) and record system (LCS). In addition the service also continues to have paper records for all carers, meaning that information is potentially stored in three places. This will continue until LCS is fully implemented.
12. Following the completion of the audit, it is confirmed that all carers and household members aged over 18 years old do have a DBS check.

Recommendations:

13. That the Social Care Services Board review the audit report and Management Action Plan and makes recommendations as necessary

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Sources/background papers:

Internal Audit Report Foster Care Service Arrangements 2015 / 16

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